

Appropriations Committee Hearing  
February 21, 2017

Dear Appropriations Committee,

My name is Alfreda Stewart. I am a resident of Bridgeport and a member of FaithActs for Education. We are people of Faith building power to get our children the education they deserve.

I have lived in the city of Bridgeport for 22 years and vote in our local and federal elections. I'm very active in my community as a Pastor and in our church prison ministry. I am also a member in the school PTSO and governance board. I have four children with special needs in different schools and have been involved in each school.

Currently I am raising my youngest child who is fifteen and has down syndrome. I have one grandson who is autistic and 3 granddaughters in the 8th and another in 5th who both have social, emotional and behavioral disorders.

Unfortunately, the Bridgeport School system is not actively equipped to deal with mental issues my children have and often focus on behavior and fail to educate them. I am often called from work, to the schools because of these issues. The PPT and IEP meetings are often misleading and my children often miss their education due to behavioral issues.

It is important to me that there is a more holistic way to educate children with special needs. They are capable of learning and being productive in our community, even though they struggle at learning in a traditional setting.

There aren't any therapeutical schools in Bridgeport while the number of special needs continues to grow in record numbers. Our children with these special needs are not expendable and deserve a quality education.

You can make a difference in our community. Tonight I ask that you adequately and equally fund out Bridgeport Public School just as you would Hartford Public Schools or our neighboring towns like Westport and Fairfield. Invest in special education and hold districts accountable for providing education for special needs students. Our children deserve to have a chance to succeed. I ask that you look in your heart and know that there is a huge need in our community and by you increasing the funding in our community our children will be successful.

Thank you,  
Alfreda Stewart  
Concerned Resident, Mother, Pastor and Voter